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ABSTRACT

Almost everyone who responded to three transportation surveys of rural Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP) projects identified transportation as a critical problem in the delivery of services to handicapped children in rural areas. Transportation problems encountered were attributed to environmental/geographic factors, inadequate funding coupled with high costs, lack of public transportation, parental inability to provide transportation, and difficulty in securing cooperation and support from other agencies. Strategies and suggestions for coping with transportation problems included: (1) maintaining contact with families through the mail, telephone, and CB or ham radios; (2) efficient scheduling and teaming to cut down on the number of trips required and to reduce boredom/fatigue factors; (3) scheduling visits to families on a biweekly rather than weekly basis; (4) using staff vehicles for reaching and/or transporting families; (5) encouraging parents to carpool to center-based programs; and (6) coordinating efforts with social service agencies and educational systems. Respondents offered fewer strategies for dealing with the lack of public transportation than for any other identified problem. Almost all projects responding to the transportation surveys reported that they had not found long-term solutions to their transportation problems; however, a number of short-term solutions were identified. (CM)

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MAKING IT WORK IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Reaching Rural Handicapped Children:
The Transportation Situation in Rural Service Delivery

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A Rural Network Monograph
Edited by Patricia Hutinger

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About the Rural Network Monographs

The State of the Art Task Force has as its responsibility the collection and distribution of information related to effective strategies for delivering services to rural young handicapped children and families. During 1980-81, a series of monographs was undertaken by contributors across the country under the editorial direction of Patricia Hutinger. Contents of the first set of monographs (see back cover) reflects the most pressing needs of rural HCEEP projects. Other topics are under consideration by members of the Rural Network and will be forthcoming.

This monograph was developed pursuant to grant G007801853 from the U.S. Department of Education. Those who undertake such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Department of Education position or policy.

OSE Project Officer, Sandra Hazen

June 1981
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A RURAL NETWORK MONOGRAPH

REACHING RURAL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN: THE TRANSPORTATION SITUATION IN RURAL SERVICE DELIVERY

by
Jamie Tucker
Mary Tom Riley
Mike Woodard

Editor: Patricia Hutinger

June, 1981

The purpose of the monograph on transportation is two-fold, first to discuss the problems faced by rural programs in providing services to handicapped young children and their families, and second, to identify some of the solutions and strategies currently in use to solve those problems. One of the outside reviewers of this manuscript indicated that the paper seemed to emphasize the problem more than necessary; nevertheless, transportation is a pervasive problem to those of us who work in rural communities across the country. It was identified as a major problem in our first survey. True, there are no easy solutions -- yet that has not stopped rural programs from trying to meet the demands of distance, terrain, and weather.

This monograph was prepared before January, 1981 and its accompanying economic and political changes. Nevertheless, the short range solutions can be used by programs serving rural handicapped and their families while the long range solutions, particularly the suggestion for weighted formulas for rural transportation dollars, may turn out to be very useful in the development of long term solutions. Alternative energy sources may also become a major part of long term solutions.

In an attempt to make the work of the Rural Network Task Force on Best Practices current, this monograph also contains a tear-out questionnaire at the end. We are interested in discovering ways that projects are solving their transportation problems -- ways we have not identified in this monograph. If you have information that would be helpful to others, related to this vital issue, fill out the questionnaire and return it to the address at the end of the questionnaire. Thanks!

May, 1981
Macomb, Illinois

Patricia L. Hutinger

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CONTENTS

I	IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES	3
II	PROBLEMS IN RURAL TRANSPORTATION.	4
	Environmental/Geographic	4
	Funding/Cost Factors	6
	Lack of Public Transportation.	7
	Parental Inability to Provide Transportation	7
	Cooperation/Support From Other Agencies.	8
III	HOW HCEEP PROJECTS ARE DEALING WITH IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS. .	9
	Environmental/Geographic	9
	Funding/Cost Factors	10
	Lack of Public Transportation.	11
	Parental Inability to Provide Transportation	11
	Cooperation/Support From Other Agencies.	11
IV	CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	12
	References.	15
	Resources	15
	Projects Responding	16
	Questionnaire to be returned.	20

REACHING RURAL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN: THE TRANSPORTATION SITUATION IN RURAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Jamie Tucker
Mary Tom Riley
Michael Woodard

The Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP) has long been involved in providing high quality services to young handicapped children throughout the nation. Many of the HCEEP's service delivery projects have involved America's rural areas, and rural service providers have had to meet the challenges of reaching isolated families in these rural areas. This factor of isolation has raised some problems unique to rural service providers. At the heart of rural service delivery, and probably the most difficult of the challenges faced by service providers, is transportation.

Almost everyone responding to a survey of rural HCEEP projects identified transportation as a critical problem. The transportation issue is so prevalent because it is at the core of all facets of rural service delivery. Parent involvement, rural Child Find programs, social and health services, therapy programs, rural education, and HCEEP demonstration projects are all dependent on reaching rural families and, ultimately, on the transportation system. However, the numerous problems involved in rural transportation make service delivery all the more difficult.

Unlike urban areas, where high population density and proximity to educational facilities and other services require limited driving, rural areas are usually characterized by long distances between points and by sparse populations. This means that service providers and rural families are required to travel many miles to provide or to take advantage of services for young handicapped children. Because they must travel more, these families and service providers face many more transportation problems than do their urban counterparts. These problems exist for service providers who must travel to reach families and for those rural families who must transport their handicapped children to urban areas for support services and to participate in center-based HCEEP programs. Whatever the delivery model, someone must travel the distance and wrestle with the problems involved.

Problems in rural transportation cover a wide range. Some of the problems identified by HCEEP projects themselves involve environmental factors over which the project may have no control, such as distance or climate. Other problems center on funding issues and availability of alternative transportation sources. However, the underlying theme in rural transportation seems to be the difficulties in reaching the isolated families.

Transportation headaches in reaching rural families are not the private domain of HCEEP projects. Other human service providers who are involved in rural areas face many of the same problems as those identified by HCEEP projects. Rural public schools face the difficulties of rising fuel costs for operating buses and driving long distances to reach isolated families. Public health agencies such as the Department of Public Health and the Disabled Children's Programs also face funding crunches on top of long distances, isolated families and vehicle problems.

The transportation issue is not confined to one agency or to one program. It is an issue that has many facets, each of which has its own cadre of problems. This monograph will define many of the transportation problems identified by HCEEP projects, will address some strategies being implemented to deal with these problems, and will suggest a long-range plan for alleviating some of the problems faced by rural service providers. The transportation issue appears to be one that will be with rural service providers for a long time to come. Each rural project will undoubtedly face its own set of travel difficulties and will cope with them as best it can. Still, the future of early intervention for handicapped children rests with reaching all young children, no matter where they live. By bringing problems to light, and by sharing solutions, HCEEP projects can only find better ways to reach and serve America's young rural handicapped.

Identifying Problems and Strategies

In an effort to identify specific transportation problems and strategies, the Rural Network conducted three separate surveys of HCEEP rural projects. Each of these surveys asked for information on transportation problems being encountered and strategies being implemented to deal with these problems.

The first survey was conducted in January, 1980, and consisted of a written questionnaire that was disseminated to all HCEEP projects who had previously identified themselves as rural. Forty-nine projects responded to this questionnaire.

A second set of responses to a similar questionnaire was collected at the Rural Conference in March, 1980. Participants who attended a session on transportation were asked to list problems/issues related to transportation in their projects and strategies they were implementing to deal with these problems. Seventeen conference participants attended this session and responded to this survey.

The final survey was done in December, 1980, at the Office of Special Education Project Directors' meeting, during a meeting of the Rural Network. Members who attended the meeting were asked to complete a brief questionnaire concerning problems, strategies, and exemplary solutions. There were eleven respondents to this questionnaire.

The rationale for conducting three separate surveys was to present as wide a range of programs as possible when discussing transportation issues in rural areas. While a project may be included in more than one survey,

new projects did respond each time, thus expanding the information on which this report is based. Respondents to the surveys represent a wide variety of rural projects. The geographic distribution includes virtually every region of the nation, including one U.S. territory. In addition, the respondents represent center-based programs, home-based programs, and a combination of these and other service delivery strategies. Some programs serve handicapped children from birth; others begin services at age three, four, or five. The responses provide a fairly comprehensive look at transportation problems and strategies in rural HCEEP projects.

Problems in Rural Transportation

As indicated in the surveys of rural HCEEP projects, providing services to handicapped children in rural areas involves a variety of problems. These problems can be classified into five major categories: environmental/geographic; inadequate funding/high cost; lack of public transportation; parental inability to provide transportation; and difficulty securing cooperation/support from other agencies.

Environmental/Geographic

In many rural areas the environment poses difficulties for rural service providers. Factors such as terrain, climate, and distance often make reaching rural families harder. Rural service providers in various regions of the nation face these situations, although they vary in difficulty depending on the region.

Terrain. The terrain, or geography of the region, affects rural service delivery. Mountains, desert, swampland, rivers and other types of terrain limit access to rural families. In some regions of Utah, for example, some rural families live in mountainous areas that are difficult to traverse. In rural West Texas, some families live in isolated farm areas that are accessible only be rutted, unmarked dirt roads. Poor roads -- often gravelly, rutted, unpaved, narrow or simply washed away -- are a rural reality. In other rural areas, such as in Arkansas, rivers create physical barriers in reaching rural families. If there is a bridge across the river at all, it is frequently washed out or in disrepair, and heavy rains or flooding make it impossible to ford the river. The end result is that the service provider cannot reach the family or the child cannot get to the program.

Climate. Weather and climate also present problems and are often related to the terrain. The combination frequently spells trouble for rural service providers. Rivers rise and mountains slide, playing havoc with roads. The same Utah mountains that create accessibility problems are also made impassable by snow during the winter. Deep snow and ice are factors in northern areas such as the Dakotas, Illinois, Alaska, and Idaho, where roads often have to be closed. Poor winter driving conditions make it difficult to reach families for home-based services or to transport them to center-based facilities.

The rutted dirt roads that are the only means of access to rural families can become quagmires during rainy periods. Even if the roads

appear passable, the rural service provider runs the risk of getting stuck in deep ruts hidden in puddles.

Other climate problems identified by rural projects include severe and blinding duststorms, ice on roads, frequent tornadoes, and heavy fog. All of these impede travel to and within rural areas and prevent rural service providers from reaching isolated families.

Distance. The distance involved in reaching rural families is perhaps the biggest transportation problem faced by rural service providers. Almost by definition, rural families live in somewhat isolated, remote areas, and most programs providing rural services are located in larger communities surrounded by sparsely populated rural areas. The rural areas served may be very large (from 1600 to 9500 square miles), encompassing several counties of a state.

Either providers or children must travel great distances to complete the service delivery circuit. Providers of home-based services in rural areas report that they often have to travel 1 1/2 to 2 hours, one-way, to reach one family. On a given day a service provider may drive 80 to 120 miles to make a home visit to one child, then travel another 20 to 50 to see a different child, and finally return to project headquarters making a total trip of 200 miles or more. The time involved in travel limits the number of children and families that can be served and the number of visits per week to each family and usually means increased costs for gas, staff time, and vehicle maintainance.

Center-based programs in rural areas have similiar kinds of distance-related problems. Handicapped children may have to spend from one-half to two hours traveling to center-based programs or centralized services. This is true whether children ride program busses or are transported by parents or volunteers. Even when programs use a centralized pick-up for transportation to the center, the distance from the pick-up point to the center and back can involve a lengthy round-trip. Add to this, travel between home and the pick-up point, and the result is young children spending a significant portion of the day just traveling. Whether the children travel or the staff travels, road time is time subtracted from valuable service contact hours.

The distance-related transportation problems encountered in rural areas have several implications for rural service delivery. The service provider driving long miles to reach isolated families often battles boredom and fatigue. Inclement weather makes long trips hazardous and more stressful, and the mechanical and physical breakdowns that do occur usually happen in remote and isolated spots where assistance is least available. The combination of these factors can cause a significant amount of wear and tear on the service provider, producing stress and possible burn-out.

The handicapped child who travels to reach center-based programs or services also experiences his/her own treadwear. The child rises early to get to the center on time, and arrives home late. Traveling long

distances can cause fatigue and irritability, making life at school rough and afternoon homelife rougher. If the parent transports the child, the same conditions may exist, possibly resulting in increased stress in the family and the handicapped child.

The distances involved in rural service delivery mean increased stress on service vehicles. Transportation in rural areas can involve from 300 to 600 miles a week or more. The service vehicle, whether a private car or a vehicle furnished by the program, will undergo significantly more wear and tear than a vehicle used for more routine travel. Adding the effects of poor roads and bad weather to this high mileage makes the cost of maintaining and supplying vehicles even higher.

Funding/Cost Factors

In his keynote speech to the HCEEP Rural Workshop in March, 1980, Dr. Jerry Fletcher, Vice-President, Manifest Learning Systems and Co-Chairman of the National Seminar on Rural Education, stated that, "When there is a sparse density of population, the cost per unit of delivering anything goes up" (Black, 1980).

This is especially true of the cost of transportation in rural areas; it is one of the more difficult problems with which rural service providers must contend. The issue of transportation costs in rural service delivery hangs neatly on two horns of a dilemma. First, the actual costs incurred in using and maintaining service vehicles seems to be higher in rural America because of increased wear and tear resulting from distances and other factors previously discussed. Second, funds for rural service transportation tend to be limited and are spread thinner than in urban and suburban areas. This means that rural service providers usually have to stretch their dollars further in order to provide services for young handicapped children.

Many rural projects use staff vehicles to reach families or to transport families to services because no other transportation is available. However, the cost of using staff vehicles is becoming prohibitive. Projects reimbursing staff for use of personal vehicles report that the reimbursement rate (reported from 12¢ per mile to 20¢ per mile) no longer covers the cost of driving the distances required. Rising gasoline and upkeep costs far exceed the reimbursement rates. The miles travelled to reach families accelerate the normal wear on the vehicle, requiring more maintenance, especially tire replacement. Also, aging vehicles usually use more gas and oil. In addition, the large amount of travel increases the likelihood of having car problems on the road. Service providers often must absorb these extra costs since reimbursement funds do not normally take these expenses into account.

Another concern of rural service providers who use their own vehicles is that of liability and insurance. Staff and volunteers may be reluctant to use their personal vehicles because of lack of or inadequate insurance for personal staff vehicles, meaning that staff are protected only as far as the limits of their own insurance policies. Even in situations where agencies do provide additional coverage for personal staff vehicles, the

limits of the individual's liability must be used up before the supplemental coverage can be utilized. These conditions obviously compound the problem of staff and volunteers using personal vehicles.

One other aspect of using staff vehicles as a means of transportation needs to be mentioned. Many programs require parents to sign exculpability clauses, sometimes called tranportation releases. These clauses presumably release the agency and/or individual from liability or responsibility in transporting the child and family. While these clauses may serve to discourage legal action by parents should an accident occur, they really do not protect the agency. In a court of law, the agency and/or the individual could still be held liable. The realities of the insurance and liability issue poses yet another aspect that must be considered when using personal vehicles for transportation.

Projects that use agency vehicles or mobile vans to reach isolated families also report that transportation costs are becoming prohibitive. The costs of gasoline, oil, and maintenance skyrocket with the tremendous number of miles travelled. Budget projections for transportation have underestimated the rapid rise in the cost of these items; programs have found their travel dollars exhausted long before the end of the budget year.

The other problem related to transportation cost involves the availability of funds. In many areas, there is a lack of funds to support rural transportation costs. Rural areas in general get less of state and federal tax dollars than urban areas. In addition, projects have limited knowledge of and access to federal or state monies that might subsidize transportation costs. There are situations where state mandates prohibit the expenditure of state or local dollars on children below the legal school age, the beneficial effects of early intervention notwithstanding. Finally, there are often difficulties encountered in transporting young handicapped children that necessitate increased spending. Specially-equipped buses or vans, additional personnel to help care for children, and appropriate safety measures are but a few of the considerations that must be taken into account, and that may require extra expenditure of funds. In all, these circumstances add up to less money to finance greater transportation costs.

Lack of Public Transportation

At first glance, one solution to the transportation problems encountered in rural areas might be public transportation. However, many rural projects reported that this is not a viable option. Public transportation is unavailable in many rural areas, largely for the geographic and financial reasons described above. Several rural service projects reported no public transit in the outlying areas they served. Existing public transit, such as bus or taxi service, is often two or more hours away. Small town transit systems typically are limited, making them impractical for many rural clients. Some projects reported difficulties initiating new bus runs to certain parts of counties served. Faced with the logistics and politics of public transportation, project staff vehicles often become the only realistic transportation option.

Parental Inability to Provide Transportation

In some areas, parents provide transportation for their children to and from programs and services. However, few rural projects have found this to be a viable solution to transportation problems.

Many parents do not have the financial means to transport their children. They are unable to buy the gasoline needed, nor can they afford public transit such as taxis. Many parents do not have the income to sustain their own family transportation, much less to transport their handicapped children to and from services. Even in the few programs that provide some reimbursement to families who drive their children, the parents face the same kind of cost problems as service providers, the reimbursement rate is usually not enough to cover the cost of transportation.

When rural families do not own a car they are incapable of providing their own transportation since there is no form of mass transportation. If a family does own a car, the vehicle may be committed in a dozen directions. Some rural parents cannot drive or do not have an extra car to use. In some rural areas, parents involved in agriculture or other employment are unable to take time away from their jobs to transport their children to and from services. Sometimes cars might be dependable for short distances, but not be up to the long haul to and from a center.

Cooperation/Support From Other Agencies

Families with handicapped children are often involved with more than one agency in getting appropriate services. The possibility of securing transportation help from these agencies for rural families seems logical, but difficulties are encountered. In some areas of the country, such as Maine, the social service transportation system is so minimal that no amount of mutual assistance can solve the problem. Secondly, service agencies do not always budget mileage funds for transporting clients to and from programs, and most agencies are unable to provide transportation to other than designated clients. When interagency transportation is available, scheduling conflicts often arise between and among agencies. Several programs reported that transportation available through state or local agencies was sometimes unreliable.

In situations where social services agencies are willing to cooperate with programs in transporting rural families, the service agencies often encounter the same problems as the projects. The agencies must also contend with distance, climate, geography, and inadequate funding.

The public school systems were not identified as a reliable source of assistance in transporting young handicapped children. Some local school systems were unable to help because of the age of the children; others were unable to come to transportation terms with the severity of some handicaps. In states where the mandate to serve handicapped children is kindergarten and above, school administrators were sometimes reluctant to become involved in transporting children below the mandated age. Projects reported situations where school administrators refused to address the transportation problems of young, rural handicapped children because public school involvement was not mandated.

Some public school programs are concerned about rural handicapped children getting to services and are willing to cooperate, but face the same problems as programs and the social service agencies. Public school bus routes may not accommodate the rural family because of their isolation or distance

from the established route. Financing for extra bus routes or special transportation services may not be available to the public school. Finally, state rules may prohibit their involvement, regardless of the circumstances or desire to help. For whatever reason, public schools cannot provide dependable solutions to rural transportation problems. Too many of the little yellow school buses don't stop here.

How HCEEP Projects Are Dealing with Identified Problems

Projects who responded in the Rural Network surveys offered a variety of strategies and suggestions for coping with the transportation problems in their area. For consistency and clarity, the suggested strategies have been classified into the five major categories identified in the section on "Problems in Rural Transportation". However, many of the strategies suggested attempt to deal with more than one of the problems. For example, one project uses four-wheel drive vehicles in delivering services to rural families. These vehicles are gas efficient and can traverse rugged terrain. The categorization of a particular strategy is therefore not intended to be restrictive or exclusive. The strategies should be viewed in terms of their adaptability and their effectiveness in dealing with several problems.

Environmental/Geographic

Programs cannot control the climate, the terrain or the distance of rural areas. However, programs identified some strategies for coping with these conditions.

Where terrain and climate prohibit travel during certain months of the year, some programs have maintained contact with families through the mail, telephone, and CB or ham radios until travel is again possible. In areas where travel is interrupted temporarily -- by duststorms for example -- programs have again used telephone, mail service and CB's to keep in touch. The "I Can/Will Do It" Project (Boone, North Carolina) utilized four-wheel drive vehicles for traveling across rugged terrain. Other programs provide agency cars so that wear and tear on personal staff cars will be minimized.

To deal with the problem of distance, some programs have experimented with efficient scheduling and teaming to cut down on the number of trips required and to reduce the boredom/fatigue factor. For example, in the Family Link Program (Lubbock, Texas), two home-based teachers travelled together to towns thirty to ninety miles from the project office. The teachers would then conduct concurrent home visits with program children who lived in that town. Following the home visits, the teachers travelled to a nearby town for additional home visits. This approach attempted, where possible, to schedule same-day home visits in towns that were geographically close, thereby minimizing the number of times a teacher had to drive a certain distance. By teaming home-based teachers for travel, the stress and fatigue involved in driving long distances alone was somewhat alleviated. The number of children that could be seen within a certain period of time was increased by concurrent scheduling. The cost of travel was reduced since there was one vehicle on the road instead of two.

Another strategy implemented by some HCEEP home-based programs involves scheduling visits to families on a biweekly basis rather than seeing every family each week. However, whether a child and family can be scheduled for biweekly rather than weekly visits depends on the severity of the child's handicapped condition(s) and the parents' ability to implement the program and cope with the child with less supervision. This strategy cuts down on the number of trips a home-based teacher makes and also helps reduce cost of service delivery. This does, however, sacrifice some contact with families and children and may not be appropriate for all families.

Funding/Cost Factors

While funding for transportation in rural areas remains a problem, projects responding in the three surveys offered a variety of suggestions. Some of these dealt with securing funding for transportation, while others aimed toward logistical solutions.

Projects have had to find ways to fund their transportation systems. One program included necessary funds in their federal budget to support the program, since such funds were unavailable through state means. Another program, RIP (Nashville, Tennessee), used Title XX funding allocations to help support rural transportation costs. A third program, Child Development Resources (Lightfoot, Virginia), used Urban Mass Transit Authority money, through a local agency, to purchase a bus.

Many strategies were suggested for reducing logistical costs. A number of projects use staff vehicles for reaching and/or transporting families, with reimbursement provided in spite of the problems posed by the strategy. Another popular strategy involved carpooling. Generally parents were encouraged to carpool, although in a few programs teachers pick up children in their area and transport them to center-based programs. Project Seek Out and Serve (Hastings, Nebraska) clusters children so that services can be provided close to home, thereby cutting down on transportation costs.

Project SEARCH (Silsbee, Texas), the Macomb 0-3 Project (Macomb, Illinois), and Project RHISE (Rockford, Illinois) drive a mobile classroom to families' homes rather than transporting children. A similiar strategy called for consolidating bus runs to cut down on the number of necessary trips, thereby reducing costs of operating buses.

In an effort to share expenses and relieve service providers of heavy costs, the DEBT Project (Lubbock, Texas) encourages parents to drive into nearby towns on a periodic basis. Arrangements are made for meeting sites in town, where parents are provided with activities and materials for working with their children. This strategy helps volunteer service providers save travel costs involved in making home visits and parents' costs are minimal.

Several programs provide an agency car for use in project activities. This eliminates wear and tear on personal cars. One program persuaded a local car dealer to donate a car, for just the cost of insurance and licensing. The Portage Project (Portage, Wisconsin) found that when a home teacher travelled more than 10,000 miles a year, it was more cost efficient for the agency to provide a car rather than for the staff person to use his/her personal car.

Project SKI-HI (Logan, Utah) identifies and trains a receptive and qualified individual near the child to minimize transportation needed for home-based programs. The specialist is paid only for the time and travel needed for scheduled services. This "enabling contract" approach is highly cost effective in areas where children are in clusters. Savings in salary overhead and travel time help reduce transportation costs.

Lack of Public Transportation

Respondents on the three transportation surveys offered fewer strategies for dealing with the lack of public transportation than for any other identified problem. This suggests that public transportation will continue to be a problem for rural projects.

One project suggested using "foster grandparents" as aides on public buses so that young handicapped children can ride. Another strategy called for contracting with individually-selected commuters to take children home from center-based programs for a set fee. Contracting with the local "Dial-A-Ride" was another suggestion. One rural program encouraged families to use Medicaid transportation allocations for public taxis, where available and appropriate. One other strategy was suggested to compensate for the lack of available public transit. This involved having the child live with foster parents close to the program during the week and go home on weekends. This strategy may not be appropriate in all cases since it does involve splitting up a family and frequent adjustments for all involved.

Parental Inability to Provide Transportation

Many programs encourage parents to provide transportation if at all possible. Two frequently-cited strategies for accomplishing this are parental carpooling and mileage reimbursement for parents.

One method combines parent driving and carpooling for center-based programs. In this arrangement, parents drive to one of several specified pick-up locations in the area, and program staff pick up the parents and children gathered at the specific locations.

Project HICOMP (University Park, Pennsylvania) suggested forming a transportation committee and a babysitting group. Under this arrangement, the transportation committee representative provides his own car and drives the parent and child to the center or service while a member of the babysitting group remains in the home with siblings when the parent accompanies the child to the program or to a service appointment.

In programs where it is impractical or impossible for parents to drive, strategies focus on delivering services to families. Use of volunteer or hired drivers (RIP-Nashville, Tennessee), extra insurance for staff who transport parents (Parent Involvement Program - Jamestown, New York), and petitioning Family Court for transportation money (Tecler Diagnostic Center-Amsterdam, New York and Parent Involvement Program-Jamestown, New York), were suggestions offered.

Cooperation/Support From Other Agencies

Strategies offered by survey respondents involved coordinating efforts with social service agencies and with educational systems, primarily public schools.

Several HCEEP programs have working arrangements with various social service agencies such as the Department of Human Resources or Public Health in providing transportation for rural families. The REACH Project (Northampton, Massachusetts) uses special agency ride services to transport its families. The Parent Involvement Program (Jamestown, New York) makes use of Department of Social Service and Developmental Disabilities Service Office personnel (primarily caseworkers and homemakers) to provide transportation for program activities. Many projects use nurses for transportation. The March of Dimes and Easter Seals were identified as possible sources of financial help for families. Contacting organizations that are willing to transport on a volunteer basis, such as Senior Citizens, could also be a source of assistance.

Many programs are coordinating with local public school programs to provide transportation for handicapped children. In the Multi-Categorical Preschool Program (Bloomington, Indiana), transportation for project children is provided by the local school system with funding supplied through the project grant from the Office of Special Education. Several projects, PEEEC (Murray, Kentucky); REECH (Union, West Virginia); WISP (Laramie, Wyoming); and the Early Childhood Center (Chepachet, Rhode Island), use public school busses to transport children at least on a limited basis. In Project CHART (Morgantown, West Virginia), the county school system provides special busses for young handicapped children. Some survey respondents indicated that program children could ride public school busses under certain conditions. One was that the bus must pass the child's home and that the parent rides with the child. A second condition stipulated that a child could ride the county school bus if an older sibling rode with the child.

In addition to coordinating with public schools, some programs are working out transportation agreements with the chilren's other placements, such as Head Start or day care. The "I Can/Will Do It" project (Boone, North Carolina) is experimenting with a "Family Aide" position in cooperation with the local Head Start agency. Under this arrangement, the aide provides transportation for the child.

Considerations for the Future

HCEEP's rural project directors and staff have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and motivation to conceptualize innovative service delivery models, to get their ideas funded, and to turn the concepts into actual programs for children and families. However, with respect to rural transportation problems, these informed and often creative people have consistently come up short in developing lasting solutions. This paper has identified a set of interlocking, and therefore, intractable, circumstances contributing to this situation. But in addition, a number of short-term solutions have also been identified.

Almost all projects responding to the transportation surveys reported that they had found no solutions to their transportation problems that were satisfactory over the long term. Most were employing short-term strategies, that are piecemeal at best, to compensate for the lack of effective long-term solutions. These factors point to the need for careful consideration of broad, long-term initiatives that address the transportation situation

in general and that may help relieve individual project problems in particular. When considering these initiatives, it is important to realize that in an era of economic austerity, some of the suggestions may seem more viable or appear more appropriate than others. Some tend to be "common sense." However, these initiatives are suggested for long-range consideration and planning and should not be viewed only in terms of present conditions. Therefore, the initiatives should all be considered and weighted in terms of their potential for helping alleviate the transportation problems faced by rural service providers. Finally, the suggestions listed are by no means conclusive. They are not the only alternatives available, and are intended to be springboards for developing other alternatives relieving the transportation problems of rural areas.

One approach to relieving some of the transportation problems may be found in tailoring specifications for rural transportation costs in block grants to states, if they do indeed become a reality. There are several alternatives that could be used to achieve this: weighting transportation funding formulas to address rural needs; matching state (or federal) dollars to those generated locally for transportation; and facilitating rural project access to surplus government vehicles. Each of these suggestions could have long-term effects on rural transportation.

Another approach that might alleviate some transportation problems involves developing alternative rural service delivery systems that bypass transportation. Possibilities might be the use of cable television, tape cassettes, written materials, and use of local personnel to provide services.

A third approach would be to consider other means of reaching families besides land vehicles. In some areas, use of small aircraft might be a solution to long distances, inaccessible mountains, or icy terrain. This approach implies careful consideration of the cost effectiveness of various transportation modes, including the effect of the different modes on the service provider and vehicle.

Another approach centers on technical assistance for rural transportation. Some strategies for achieving this include developing state guidelines for local education agencies concerning transporting young handicapped children; providing projects with information on accessing state and federal transportation dollars; and encouraging interagency dialogue and cooperation among agencies serving rural areas and at the federal and state levels.

Since the problems related to transportation reveal so many complexities, it may be most practical to emphasize techniques of maximizing the time spent with children and families in rural areas. If, indeed, time is to be in short supply, because of the difficulties related to accessing rural homes, then we must seriously consider ways to insure that the impact of a quality program is indeed effective.

These suggestions imply long-term solutions to the transportation problems faced by rural service providers. They also call for a cooperative approach that goes beyond individual programs struggling to deal with their transportation dilemmas. It is obvious from the responses of HCEEP

projects to the transportation surveys that the problems identified are almost universal across projects and that the strategies being implemented tend to be temporary at best. Taking into account the aforementioned resourcefulness of HCEEP projects, this indicates that solutions to the transportation problems go beyond the resources of individual projects and must be addressed at a higher level. Until more effective, long-term solutions can be developed, individual projects will continue to struggle with short-term means of dealing with transportation problems encountered in delivering services to handicapped children in rural areas.

References

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Resources

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U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Elderly and Handicapped Transportation: Planning Checklist. Washington, D.C., 1979.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural and Small Schools. The National Seminar on Rural Education. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Institute of Education. Washington, D.C., 1979.

Governor's Committee on Rural Public Transportation. Final Recommendations: Transportation Options for Rural and Small Community Populations in North Carolina. North Carolina Department of Transportation: Raleigh, N.C., 1979.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Transportation Solutions for the Handicapped. Volume 4 Reports, Washington, D.C., 1976.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Paratransit Resource Guide. National Technical Information Service: Springfield, Virginia, 1979.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Planning Guidelines for Coordinated Agency Transportation Services. Washington, D.C., 1980.

List of Projects Responding to HCEEP Rural Transportation Surveys

This list of projects responding to the surveys and/or referenced in this monograph is provided for those who wish to obtain more indepth information about a particular strategy utilized by one or more of the projects. Some of these projects may no longer be funded by HCEEP. However, they are included in the list because they have had experience in rural service delivery and the transportation problems involved. They may be able to serve as resources for projects currently struggling with the transportation problems encountered in rural service delivery.

Each project listed includes address, phone, and contact person as provided on survey responses.

"I Can/Will Do It" Project
Appalacian State University
Department of Special Education
Edwin Duncan Hall
Boone, North Carolina 28608
(704) 262-4034
Contact: Ralph Conn

Project Family Link
Special Projects Division
Texas Tech University
P.O. Box 4170
Lubbock, Texas 79409
(806) 742-3296
Contact: Mary Tom Riley

The RIP Expansion Project
2400 White Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
(615) 269-5671
(615) 741-6736
Contact: Matthew Timm

Project RHISE
650 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103
(815) 965-6766
Contact: Sue Wilke

DEBT (Developmental Education Birth Through Two)
Lubbock Independent School District
Central Office Annex
1628 19th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79401
(806) 747-2641
Contact: Dianne Garner

Project SKI-HI
Department of Communication Disorders
Utah State University
Logan, Utah 84321
(801) 750-1382
Contact: Tom Clark

Child Development Resources
[illegible] Outreach Project
[illegible]atfoot, Virginia 23090
(804) 565-0303
Contact: Sharon Kiefer

Seek Out and Serve
P.O. Box 2047
Educational Service Unit #9
Hastings, Nebraska 68701
(402) 463-5611
Contact: Polly Feis, Genny Locke

Project SEARCH
415 West Avenue N
Silsbee, Texas 77656
(713) 385-5286
Contact: Jimmie Gawling

Macomb 0-3 Regional Project
Western Illinois University
Horrabin Hall Room 27
Macomb Illinois 61455
(309) 298-1634
Contact: Patricia Hutinger

PIP (Parent Involvement Program)
231 Roberts Building
Jamestown, New York 14701
(716) 483-0214
(716) 483-0213
Contact: Marilyn Johnson

Tecler Diagnostic Center
Greater Amsterdam School District
11 Liberty Street
Amsterdam, New York 12010
(518) 843-3180
Contact: Richard Minogue

The REACH Project
Vernon Street School
Vernon Street
Northhampton, Massachusetts 01060
(413) 586-5762
Contact: Burt Franzman

Portage Project
412 East Slifer Street
P.O. Box 564
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
(608) 742-8811
Contact: David Shearer

HICOMP (Handicapped Infants Comprehensive Outreach Model Program)
315 Cedar
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802
(814) 863-2276
Contact: Frances Moosbrugger

Project WISP
Box 3224
University Station
Laramie, Wyoming 82071
(307) 766-6145
Contact: Janis Jelenick

Project REECH (Remedial Early Education for Children with Handicaps)
Monroe County Schools
P.O. Box 330
Union, West Virginia 24134
(304) 772-3095
Contact: Henry Lynn

Early Childhood Center
Chepachet School
Chepachet, Rhode Island 02814
(401) 568-3161
Contact: Ruth Schennum

Project CHART
University Affiliated Center
311 Oglebay Hall
West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506
(304) 293-3303
Contact: John Cone or
Annette Hanson

Providence Project
916 Pacific Ave.
P.O. Box 1067
Everett, Washington 98206
(206) 258-7312
Contact: Shirley Joan Lemmen

Project PEEP (Parent Education - Early Prevention)
135 W. 6th
Colby, Kansas 67701
(913) 462-6781
Contact: Carol Leland, Sharon Hixson, Karin Rumold

Multi-Categorical Preschool
Developmental Training Center
2853 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47401
(812) 337-6805
(812) 337-0741
Contact: Gen Shelton

PEEEC (Project for the Early Education of Exceptional Children)
Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative
Special Education Building
Murray State University
Murray, Kentucky 42071
(502) 762-6965
Contact: Melba Casey

Project RURAL
Mississippi University for Women
Speech and Hearing Center
P.O. Box W-1340
Columbus, Mississippi 39701
(601) 328-9601
Contact: Barbara Hanners

Project TEACH
1020 Barnette
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 456-2640
Contact: Nancy Hoyt

Punkin' Patch Project
High Plains Education Cooperative
919 Zerr Road
Garden City, Kansas 67846
(316) 275-9684
Contact: Sarah Osbern

Ferndale Homebased Preschool
Ferndale School District
P.O. Box 428
Ferndale, Washington 98248
(206) 384-3591
Contact: Robert Diaz

Northern Lakes Region Special Services
Humiston Building
Meredith, New Hampshire 03253
(603) 279-7938
Contact: Ramona Patterson

Early Intervention Project/Outreach
ISMRRD
130 S. First Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
(313) 764-4115
Contact: Diane D'Eugenio

Project PAR
Saginaw County Child Development Centers, Inc.
p.o. Box 3224
Saginaw, Michigan 48605
(512) 752-2193
Contact: Nels Andersen

Vinton County Early Intervention for Non-Categorical Handicapped Children
Vinton County Local Schools
Memorial Building
McArthur, Ohio 45651
(614) 596-5218
Contact: Rebecca Zuleski

Top of Alabama Regional Education Service Agency, Handicapped Children's Early Education Program
3125 University Drive, Suite 2-C
Huntsville, Alabama 35805
(205) 533-5955
Contact: Allen Hyatt

Butler County School Board Council Early Childhood Program
Box 104
El Dorado, Kansas 67042
(316) 321-3266
Contact: Vickie Cochrane

Little Egypt Early Childhood Program
JAMP Diagnostic Center
Route 1
Karnak, Illinois 62956
(618) 634-9568
(618) 634-9333
Contact: Willa Dean Propst

Family and Infant Learning Program
Valley Community Mental Health Center
301 Scott Ave.
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505
(304) 296-1731
Contact: Mimmie Byrne

Model Preschool Project
W. 1025 Indiana
Spokane, Washington 99205
(509) 456-7086
Contact: Candy Baker

Telstar
1691 M-32 West
Alpena, Michigan 49707
(517) 354-3101
Contact: Thomas Miller

A Comprehensive Program for Preschool Handicapped Children and Their Families in Rural and Non-Urban Areas
108 South 8th
Fargo, North Dakota 58103
(701) 237-4513
Contact: William Hoehle

Pre-School Handicap
Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative
P.O. Box 279
Tazewell, Tennessee 37879
(615) 626-9270
contact: Vicki Dean

Comprehensive Services for Rural Handicapped Young Children
1515 Pythian
Springfield, Missouri
(417) 869-0574
Contact: Louise Stefanowicz

Magnolia Early Education Program
Magnolia School District #14
P.O. Box 428
Magnolia, Arkansas 71753
(501) 234-3511
Contact: Darlene Montgomery

Center for the Developmentally Disabled
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Station A
Durant, Oklahoma 74701
(405) 924-2355
Contact: Elizabeth Walters

Access to Mainstream Outreach Training Project
Rt. 1, Box 335
Colerain, North Carolina 27924
(919) 356-4198
Contact: Constance Holt

Chesopeake Home Intervention Clinical School Project
2107 E. Liberty Street
Chesopeake, Virginia 23324
(804) 545-3541
Contact: Genoa Ray McPhatus

Infant Care Program
Merced County Department of Education
632 W. 13th
Merced, California 95340
(209) 722-5184
Contact: Nancy Harvey

New Vistas
P.O. Box 2332
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87501
(505) 988-3803
Contact: Catherine Gaines

CFC
P.O. Box 110-A
Ochlocknee, Georgia 31773
(912) 574-5123
Contact: Sonia Busbee, Lillie Bogan
Kathy Jones

Project ForSight
Texas School for the Blind
110 W. 45th
Austin, Texas 78756
(512) 451-6491
Contact: Lee Robinson

Project RUN/Outreach
North Mississippi Retardation Center
P.O. Box 967
Oxford, Mississippi 38655
(601) 234-1476 ext. 219
Contact: Lisa Romine

INREAL Outreach
Box 121
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80304
(303) 492-8727
Contact: Karen Hansen

Project First Chance: Outreach
Department of Special Education
College of Education
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721
(602) 626-3248
Contact: Jeanne McCarthy

United Cerebral Palsy of the Blue Grass
Box 8003
465 Spring Hill Drive
Lexington, Kentucky 40503
(606) 278-0549
Contact: Denise Wooten

Early Intervention Program
St. Lawrence - Lewis Co. Boles
Outer State Street
Carton, New York 13617
(315) 265-4356
Contact: Maureen Sullivan

Pearl River Infant Project
P.O. Box 178
Picayune, Mississippi 39466
(601) 798-7132
Contact: Mary Marcia Yoder

Project Upstart
2800 13th St. NW
Washington D.C. 20009
(202) 232-2342
Contact: Lee Walshe and Larry Szuch

Project FINIS (Families With Infants
in Networks of Interactional Support)
c/o Area Education Agency #6
210 S. 12th Ave.
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
(515) 752-1578
Contact: Damon Lamb

Washington County Children's Program
Outreach Project
P.O. Box 311
Machais, Maine 04654
(207) 255-3426
Contact: Jane Weil

S-E-Kan Project
Parsons Research Center
Parsons, Kansas 67357
(316) 421-6550
Contact: Lee Snyder-McLean

Questions for the Future of Rural Transportation

The Rural Network is committed to ongoing appraisal of the status of rural service delivery. As a result, this tear-out questionnaire is provided for those who wish to respond and/or who have developed innovative ways of coping with rural transportation issues.

Name of Project/Program/Agency: _____

_____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____

Contact Person: _____

1. What are some effective ways to gather cost/time data on various rural delivery strategies (eg: home-based vs center-based; carpooling)?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile vans for reaching rural families?

3. What are strategies that minimize travel distances between clients and service providers?

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying or leasing automobiles for service providers? What experience have you had in leasing or buying?

5. Have you been successful in getting parents to provide transportation? How?

6. Do you have information on comparative costs of vehicles used (mobile vans, cars, buses, other)?

7. Are there other transportation strategies you have implemented that have proven successful?

Return to:

Corrine Garland, Coordinator
HCEEP
Rural Network
731 Wax Myrtle
Houston, Texas 77079

About the HCEEP Rural Network

The Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP) Rural Network is an association of professionals representing educational programs for young handicapped children in rural communities. Members are drawn primarily from projects supported by the HCEEP, Office of Special Education, Department of Education. Formed in 1978, the Rural Network undertook to provide a voice for rural America's young handicapped children and their families. The network aimed to increase educational opportunities for this population through the accomplishment of a variety of activities. Participating projects also intended to enhance their own effectiveness in providing educational and supportive services in rural areas. For further information, contact:

Harris Gabel
P.O. Box 151
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

or

Patricia Hutinger
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27 Horrabin Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

or

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731 Wax Myrtle Lane
Houston, Texas 77079

Additional copies of this monograph may be secured by sending $3.00 to cover cost of production and mailing to:

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College of Education
Room 27, Horrabin Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

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- Parent Involvement
- Transportation
- Interagency Coordination
- Recruiting Staff
- Securing Funds
- Service Delivery Models